



Crisis and Contingency Response Planning in the Serbian Armed Forces

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To achieve great things, two things are needed; a plan, and not quite enough time.

—Leonard Bernstein

By the very nature of their missions, the world's militaries spend much of their time developing plans that address identified risks, only to find themselves reacting to security threats from an unanticipated sector, or to manmade and natural disasters. The ability to "turn on a dime" is based in a creditable crisis action planning (CAP) process designed to support the military commander's efforts to develop, analyze, select and implement a course of action (COA) within a constrained timeframe. Although most militaries have a CAP capability, the United States has institutionalized the process, and demonstrated its capabilities to address issues from the strategic to the local.

THE MISSION

For every Georgian-Russian style conflict, there are multiple CAP applications to address manmade or natural disasters. It was with this focus that the Serbian Armed Forces (SAF) requested that the Commander, U.S. European Command (USEUCOM) provide a Traveling Contact Team (TCT) to conduct a workshop on this topic. In support of this request, the U.S. Army War College (USAWC) provided a TCT composed of Professor Bernard F. Griffard, Center for Strategic Leadership (CSL); Colonel Michael S. Chesney, Department of Command, Leadership, and Management (DCLM); and Lieutenant Colonel Gregory D. Hillebrand, Department of Military Strategy, Planning and Operations (DMSPO). This Team conducted a *Crisis and Contingency Response Planning Workshop* for the General Staff, Serbian Armed Forces (GSSAF), and other Defense planners September 9-10, 2010 in Belgrade, Serbia. The workshop provided an overview of the U.S. crisis action planning process and military



Brigadier General Mitar Kovac, Chief, J5, GSSAF, opens the workshop

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disaster response planning methodology and procedures, increasing SAF preparedness to assist civil authorities in times of natural disaster or crisis.

WORKSHOP METHODOLOGY

Upon its arrival in Belgrade, the Team engaged in background discussions with Lieutenant Colonel Ryan Fayrweather, Chief, Office of Defense Cooperation (ODC), U.S. Embassy Belgrade, and Major Devin Braun, Bilateral Affairs Officer (BAO), ODC. In addition to providing information on the overall situation and sensitivities in Serbia, key topics discussed included the current SAF crisis action planning procedures and the in place process for the SAF to provide support to civilian authorities in case of a manmade or natural disaster. A key document made available for review was the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Preparedness, Planning, and Economic Security (PPES) Program report on the progress of the Sector for Emergency Management, Ministry of Interior, in meeting PPES compliance. A critical step forward has been the 2009 *Law on Emergency Situations*, which defines funding to address emergency situations from the national down to the local levels. During the workshop this document was referred to when looking at defense support to civilian authorities (DSCA) issues.

To maximize the available time, the USAWC Team employed information briefings followed by tabletop practical exercises which allowed for emphasis on the key CAP issues. In order to set a baseline, the first day examined and compared the U.S. and SAF CAP processes, while the second day was focused on DSCA procedures. This format was received enthusiastically by the participants. In addition to preventing “death by PowerPoint,” it gave them a chance to study a problem within a constrained timeframe, formulate a recommendation, and then brief that recommendation. It stimulated give and take during the workshop and maintained a high level of participant interest throughout.

WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS

The workshop included 25 Army and Air Force Officers ranging in rank Captain through Colonel. These planners represented the J5, GSSAF, the Joint Operations Command (JOC), and representatives from the individual Service staffs. Throughout the Workshop these individual officers exhibited a good grasp of the techniques required when planning within a constrained timeframe. With the 2006 dissolution of the Serbia and Montenegro Federation, the SAF lost its naval capabilities. The existent Riverine Force belongs to the Ministry of the Interior. Given the topic of the workshop, a valid critique of the participant makeup was the absence of representatives from outside the Ministry of Defense. In future events on this topic inclusion of representatives from the Ministry of Interior, primarily from the Office of Emergency Sector Management (Serbian FEMA equivalent), would provide opportunities to improve in interagency coordination efforts.



Colonel Milorad Vidakovic, Chief, Planning and Development, J5 GSSAF, outlined the SAF contingency response planning process

CAP BASICS

On Thursday, September 9, 2010, Brigadier General Mitar Kovac, Chief, J5, GSSAF, launched the workshop, setting out the goals for the event. Following the opening remarks, Lieutenant Colonel Hillebrand provided an overview of the U.S. CAP process and how it is applied in crisis and disaster response situations. Following this presentation, Colonel Milorad Vidakovic, Chief, Planning & Development, J5 GSSAF, outlined the SAF contingency response planning process. On comparison, the U.S. system better defines the requirements as it progresses from assessment to execution, however, the SAF system, functioning within a smaller sphere, has the potential for rapid requirements turnaround. The multiple concurrent planning levels that exist in the U.S. system are reduced to two levels in the SAF. The General Staff looks at the big picture, while the Joint Operations Command handles the unit issues. Using a peacekeeping scenario, *Crisis in the Southern Caucasus*, as a vehicle, the team then walked through the CAP processes.

Breaking the planners into two groups (GSSAF and JOC/Service Staffs), they studied the problem and then briefed back their assessment made at their level. This was a very successful exercise in which the SAF demonstrated their capability to identify and address not just the problem at hand, but the follow on issues.

DSCA

In the event of a natural or manmade disaster, the SAF, like the U.S. military, is expected to provide niche and gap support to the Sector for Emergency Management. Procedures for requesting this support are in place. The challenge is the execution of effective CAP processes to ensure that the selected SAF response is suitable, feasible and acceptable. Colonel Chesney drew on his experience as the former Defense Coordinating Officer (DCO) for U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Region V, to clearly and effectively layout the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) policy and processes. To set the stage, he first laid out in detail the DoD response philosophy; the tiered disaster/emergency response process; the command and coordination issues; the support cycle; and interdepartmental reimbursement procedures. He also explained the importance of the DCO role in ensuring responsive and seamless support to the civilian sector Incident Commander.



GSSAF officers assess Vojvodina earthquake scenario response

To illustrate these processes, Colonel Chesney used the August 2007 Minneapolis I-35W bridge collapse. As the DCO for this event, he augmented his personal recollections with a professionally produced video record of the disaster and its aftermath. Using a timeline from the initial collapse at 6:05 p.m., August 1, 2007, to DSCA mission completion on August 24, 2007, Colonel Chesney effectively walked workshop participants through the process the United States uses to provide the necessary support to civilian authorities in time of disaster or crisis. During the discussion the similarities between the Serbian and U.S. systems were highlighted. Again, as mentioned above, size does make a difference, such as the reduced bureaucratic requirements in the SAF system.

Buoyed by the solid groundwork laid in these two presentations the SAF staff was again broken into tiered groups as described above, and given a scenario situation to plan against. The Vojvodina earthquake scenario was set in 2012. On December 12 at 10:30 a.m. a 7.7 magnitude earthquake occurs in the northern Province of Vojvodina, creating disastrous conditions in an area that encompasses approximately 21,000 square kilometers and affects a population of approximately 2 million people. In anticipation of a request for military support by the Sector for Emergency Management, the staff groups were instructed to study the scenario deliver an initial assessment with recommended priorities for support and a prioritization for the restoration of critical infrastructure. Following their back brief of the recommendations, they were asked to define the disaster command structure for this disaster, from national to local levels and the position of the military at each level. With these foundation questions answered, Colonel Chesney facilitated a detailed discussion of requirements identification and execution processes.

BUILDING PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

In 1995, the Military-to Military (M2M) program mission was to “...deploy personnel to selected countries of Central/Eastern Europe and Africa to assist their militaries in the transition to democracies with free market economies.” This was accomplished through TCTs that focused is on strengthening military professionalism, democratization and civilian control of the military. Today, with the integration into NATO and other regional security organizations of many of these countries, the TCTs continue to reinforce these key issues, along with strengthening the professional relationships between these countries and the United States military. The USAWC makes available the professionalism, expertise, and insight of its faculty to support the TCTs as part of its mission to provide support to the operational force.



Crisis & Contingency Response Planning Workshop Participants

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